to the origins of Christian Art must be radically revised. It was formerly considered that it had its roots in pagan Egypt; now, it appears highly probable that (as in so much else) the Church simply carried on the tradition which already obtained in the Synagogue. But the whole of European painting depends, in the last instance, on ecclesiastical and early Christian origins; hence, if this new theory is correct, the tradition of Giotto and of Cimabue goes back ultimately to a Jewish prototype.[1]

Whether or no this is the case, the Jewish inspiration of much of European art cannot be denied. Three-quarters at least of European paintings before 1500, and a very high proportion after that date, deal with Biblical—i.e. Hebrew—characters and scenes. It is djffimilt to conceive Italian art of the Renaissance without such familiar episodes as the Creation, the lives of the patriarchs, the triumph of Judith and so on: while (though the fact was not realised or conveyed in pictorial art until the last century) the central subject of all—Jesus and the Madonna—was essentially Hebraic.

It was Dutch painting which first made a definite breach in the ecclesiastical tradition in art. Yet this by no means signified a revolt against the Hebraic subject-matter. Rembrandt, for example, turned again and again to the Bible for inspiration, though he was more attracted by its dramatic than its spiritual values. Moreover, his realistic sense led him to the Jewish

quarter of Amsterdam in order to obtain local colour: with the result that his purview extended from the Hebrews of old to the Jews of his own day, depicted with a characteristic intermingling of realism and romanticism. Tor many years of his life, Rembrandt lived among Jews, painted Jews, and worked frequently

[1] It may be added, in connexion with this, that a professional Jewish animal-painter named Eudoxios lived at Rome in the Imperial period.